(c) how many applications under this section were received during 1984, 1985, 1986 and out of them in how many cases the commutation was done; and

(d) whether it is proposed to grant amnesty in cases where the offence is of technical nature only and where the concerned person has tendered unconditional apology like I.T. and F.E.R.A. offenders amnesty scheme?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) There is no such proposal.

(c) Petitions under Section 433 Cr. P.C. for commutation of sentences are forwarded to the concerned State Government for disposal, unless any such petition is for the commutation of sentence for an offence under a Central Act or for the commutation of sentence awarded by a Court in a Union Territory. No separate record is maintained of the petitions forwarded to the State Governments. During 1984-85, two petitions were received for commutation of sentence for offences under Central Acts and one petition was received for commutation of sentence from a prisoner in a Union Territory. In one case the sentence of the prisoner was commuted.

(d) There is no such proposal.

Raids by Central Bureau off Investigation

403. SHRI SURAJ PRASAD:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Bureau of Investigation conducted raids in 24 cases all over the country; on 21.10.86;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what further action are being taken against the persons involved?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI): (a) Yes, Sir. CBI has conducted raids in various cities on 21.10.86 in pursuance of 27 cases registered against officials of the Government and Public Sector Undertakings.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Working hours in Central Government Offices

404. SHRI SURAJ PRASAD:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to increase the working hours of Central Government employees; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government have decided to increase the working hours of the office staff in Government of India from 37½ hours per week to 40 hours per week by increasing daily working hours by 30 minutes. This decision will be implemented shortly.

Smuggling on Indo-Tibet border

405. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA:
SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item cap-

tion: 'smuggling on Indian Tibet Border' appearing in the Indian Express of 13.10.1986;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the Border Security Force (BSF) Jawans posted in the eastern border of Himachal Pradesh which adjoins Tibet have failed to detect the smuggling activities; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to stop smuggling at Indo-Tibet border?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Border Security Force (BSF) does not man the Indo-Tibet Border. There are permanent as well as seasonal posts of Indo-Tibetan Border Police in the Himachal Pradesh sector of the Indo-Tibet Border. The posts in the area are constantly alerted to check smuggling and intensify patrolling on all possible ingress routes.

Manufacture of a knife by a Tihar Jail convict

406. SHRI RAM AWADESH SINGH:
SHRI RAM NARESH KUSHAWAHA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a knife was manufactured by a convict in Tihar Jail itself for the purpose of killing an official of the jail recently;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any inquiry to know how the convict obtained the material and the inputs to manufacture a knife and also to identify the jail staff; if any, involved in the matter; and

(c) if so, what is the outcome thereof and the action taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) to (c) No knife was manufactured by a convict in Tihar Jail. However, during a routine check of the latrine of the factory one strip of iron measuring 14"X 3" and one file were recovered on 26th September, 1986. During the inquiry, it was found that these two items were kept hidden by one convict from his own kit supplied in the said factory. The superintendent, Tihar Jail punished the convict according to the Jail rules by keeping him in segregation for 15 days.

Special verification for candidates from *Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura*

407. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI N. E. BALARAM:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has struck down the system of special verification of character and antecedents of candidates for Central Services coming from Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the Central Government's reaction thereto?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Supreme Court in its judgement delivered on 26th August, 1986 held that the practice evolved by the Central Government for special verification of character and antecedents of the candidates from the States of Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura for recruitment to Central Services, was violative of Article 14 of the Constitution and that it was discriminatory. Government of India have, therefore, withdrawn the special verification procedure in respect of candidates hailing from these States by an order issued on the 4th September, 1986.